



## ROLE OF AYURVEDA IN PUBLIC HEALTH

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### ABSTRACT

Ayurveda is an ancient holistic system of medicine, which mainly considers these two points on how to keep a healthy person healthy and how to eradicate the illness of the patient and the same objective of public health are also to prevent diseases, cure diseases, and provide long life by improving the quality of life of the person. The present composition tries to dichotomize the conception of public health and health detail in the environment of Ayurveda. The classical texts of Ayurveda describe many principles related to public health such as infectious diseases, immunity, nutrition, etc. But the current documents have been concentrated densely on the conception of public health in Ayurveda. Various Ayurvedic texts, relevant modern medical science books, various research/review articles, and websites have been used for this study as source materials. The aim of Public Health and Ayurveda is mainly the same. In today's era, the disease is mainly related to lifestyle disorders, and we can avoid these diseases by following the principles of Ayurveda and if we suffer from a disease then we can get rid of these diseases through Ayurveda treatments. With the recent development of the National Rural Health Mission and *Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram*, some principles and measures are being used very effectively for the prevention of public health problems. The simple regimens described in ancient classical texts are in extreme use in dealing with the public health problems facing the present-day world. So, Ayurveda has an important role in public health.

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### INTRODUCTION

Only a healthy individual can build a healthy civilization and a healthy civilization can build a healthy nation that is why the constitution has also given health an important right. The social impact of ill health is on the rise, with some diseases affecting not only the health of individuals but also that of a nation's economy with their increasing healthcare costs. Ayurveda is believed to be the oldest medical science of human civilization. It is more clearly the science of life as it transcends the mere treatment of disease and embraces a wide array of principles and practices which deal with each individual in its entirety. Postulations proposed by Ayurveda elites are of perennial relevance and many of those hold good value even today. Some of the contemporary concepts of today can be understood by the same age-old principles and practices of Ayurveda. It primarily ponders these two points on how to keep a healthy person healthy and how to eliminate the illness of the patient and the same objective of public health are also to prevent diseases, cure diseases, and deliver long life by improving the quality of life of the individual<sup>[1]</sup>. In Ayurveda, the body constitutes *Dosha*(Humour), *Dhatu*(Tissues), and

*Mala*(Faeces). If *Dosha*(Humour), *Dhatu* (Tissues), and *Mala*(Faeces) have imbalanced then the individual gets sick. Many ideologies have been defined in Ayurveda such as *Tridosha*, *Sapta Dhatu*, *Mal*, *Panchamahabhuta* (Five elements), *Prakriti* (Constitution), *Guna*(Quality), *Rasa* (Taste), *Agni* (Gastric fire), *Srotas* (Channels), and its personalized approach to *Nidan* (Etiology), *Chikitsa*, *Rasayan* (Macrobiotics/Life lengthening drugs)<sup>[2]</sup>, and *Yoga*. If an individual follows these ideologies in routine life, that individual can attain a healthy life. With modern science, we can only achieve some relief from diseases, but with Ayurveda, we can also evade disease, if we get any disease then we can get rid of it, Ayurveda has an important role in Public Health<sup>[3]</sup>, and it is necessary to bring public health as an equal or a stream of mainly community medicine. General principles will be very important. In classical texts of Ayurveda, many principles related to public health such as infectious diseases, immunity, nutrition, etc. are described but the article is limited to the concept of public health and health in brief.

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

Various Ayurvedic texts, relevant modern medical science books, various research/ review articles, and websites are have been used for this study as source materials.

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## Ayurveda and Health

“Health is defined as a state of complete physical, mental, and social wellbeing and not merely an absence of disease or infirmity”<sup>[4]</sup> by World Health Organization. Three dimensions of health, physical, mental, and social are described in this definition. It stands with a wide description of health enclosing all three magnitudes of health and rules out the mere absence of disease. According to Ayurveda a state of balanced *Dosha*, *Dhatu* (tissue system), *Agni* (enzymes and metabolites), *Malakriya* (state of excretory functions), *Prasanna* (ecstasy), *Aatma* (Soul), *Indriya* (senses), and *mana* (Mind) is called *Swastha*<sup>[5]</sup>. If we compare these definitions, we discover that both the definitions have the same sense of meaning, however, it seems that by looking at the definition of Swastha in Ayurveda, WHO has given this definition. Three different types of *Doshas* are described by Ayurveda, named *Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha*, and each of these *Doshas* are further classified into five types. Sometimes *Vata* is compared with the nervous system due to some of its properties, *Pitta* with the GI system and specifically with gastric enzymes and the metabolites and *Kapha* with some of the fluids of our body such as phlegm and synovial fluid. Seven different types of *Dhatu* are also described by Ayurveda these are *Rasa*, *Rakta*, *Mamsa*, *Meda*, *Asthi*, *Majja*, and *Shukra*. Each *Dhatu* is originating from prior *Dhatu* like *Rakta* is fabricated of *Rasa*, *Mamsa* is fabricated of *Rakta*, *Meda* is fabricated of *Mamsa*, etc. the body territory, i.e. the territory of *Rasa*, *Rakta*, *Mamsa*, *Meda*, *Asthi*, *Majja*, and *Shukra* is ruled by *Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha* and hereafter the body continues to function and because of this functioning, we can do our daily life activities. *Malas* are waste products, which are by-products of our daily activities. *Aharaj Mala* (feces), *Mutra* (urine), and *Sweda* (sweat) are the three types of *malas*. Ayurveda is based on the *Dosh-Dhatu-Mala* concept. *Doshas* are body elements that perform body functions. The body is made up of seven *Dhatus* and *Malas* are waste products of the body. If all of these works well, then good health can be maintained. If anything goes imbalanced in this chain of activity then we get sick.

## Public Health and Ayurveda

According to Public Health as, “the science and art of preventing diseases, prolonging life, and promoting health and efficiency through organized community effort”<sup>[6]</sup>. The definition underlines three significant features, those are prevention of disease, prolongation of life, and promotion of health. These three significant features have also been highlighted by proponents of Ayurveda. The objective of public health is indirectly described in Ayurveda’s objectives<sup>[7]</sup>. The vision of including Public Health as the theme for Ayurveda Day 2018 is to strengthen Ayurveda in Public Health so that a socially and ecologically sustainable health care system with a vision, attitude, and orientation for achieving holistic health and wellness. The objective of public health is indirectly described in Ayurveda’s objectives. Two aims are mainly focused on Ayurveda; one is the fortification of the health of a healthy individual (virtue, purpose or wealth, pleasure, and release or liberation from cycle of rebirth), and the second is the elimination of disease of a patient<sup>[8]</sup>. So Ayurveda underscores the protection of the health of a healthy individual, which means, if a person is healthy his/her health is ensured. For this purpose classical texts of Ayurveda advocate numerous lifestyle administrations. *Dinacharya* (Daily health promotional activities) and *Ritucharya* (Health promotional

activities during the specific season), *Ahara* (Specific dietary regimen), *Pathya* (wholesome diet), *Apathya* (Unwholesome diet), etc. are some of the modalities of this concept. Many of these modalities stated above are the health promotion strategies of the present day. The second part of the aim of Ayurveda describes curative health, which means a mitigation of disease. But if we look at various therapeutic regimens described in the classical texts of Ayurveda, all of those justify three levels of prevention such as primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention. Let us understand this very well; primary prevention emphasizes health promotion and specific protection which can be achieved by above said modalities; secondary prevention emphasizes early diagnosis and treatment can be achieved by various methods of diagnosis. Such as *Darshana* (inspection), *Sparshana* (palpation), and *Prashna* (interrogation), *Dashvidh Pareeksha*, etc. and treatment tools such *Shaman* (alleviation) and *Sodhana* (purification); tertiary prevention emphasizes disease modification and disability limitation which can also be achieved by the help of various treatment modalities such as *Shaman Chikitsa*, *Shodhan Chikitsa*, *Panchakarma chikitsa*, etc. Ayurveda itself has lots of greatness about health science, the concept of “*ayu*” or age is not just only the No of an individual’s life span, the word ‘*Ayu*’ has a great and beautiful classification itself in *Sukhayu* (happy individuals life), *Dukhayu* (unhappy individual), *Hitayu* (happy life considering community aspect), *Ahitayu* (opposite to qualities of Hitayu)<sup>[9]</sup>. Briefly the principles and practices of Ayurveda justify the principles and practice of public health in its way.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The present article is limited to two important concepts; Achieving the concept of public health through Ayurveda. In Ayurveda, when we try to understand the concept of public health we should also understand health. This article does not describe in detail what all the principles have been designated in Ayurveda under the larger sunshade of public health. This study intentionally limits its scope to a concise concept of public health and health briefly. On the other hand, it tries to make as much information as is needed to understand both these concepts. We can understand from the above study that the aim of Public Health and Ayurveda is mainly the same. In today’s era, the disease is mainly related to lifestyle disorders and we can avoid these diseases by following the principles of Ayurveda and if we suffer from a disease then we can get rid of these diseases through Ayurveda treatment. The sources of income of today’s person have also been reduced, and there is a big expenditure on health services but using Ayurveda we can save it.

### **Strength of Ayurveda to offer public in developed countries:**

Total Health care, Lifestyle consultation, Psychological consultation, Spiritual way of life, Rejuvenation (Rasayana) therapy, Panchakarma therapy which rejuvenates biological systems of the body, Management of lifestyle / NCD disorders, Management of chronic and incurable diseases, Management of adverse and toxic effects of drugs.<sup>[10]</sup>

**Requirements of developed countries:** Reducing the cost of Health care in developed countries, Management of lifestyle disorders, Management of chronic and incurable diseases, Non-availability of management of iatrogenic disorders, adverse and toxic effects of drugs, Requirement of the safe, cost-effective, and holistic medical system.

**Health care program in demand:** Lifestyle management, Stress management, yoga, Aesthetics and beauty care, Diet and cooking advice, Management of oral hygiene and care of ear nose throat, Prenatal and postnatal care, Knowledge of sexual behavior and Kamashastra, Child health care management, and baby massage, etc.

## CONCLUSION

Ayurveda learns the art of living a healthy life by eradicating diseases along with a healthy life whereby a person attains health and longevity. Thus, in Ayurveda, the concept of public health, even encircling all age groups, emphasizes primarily the separate ability of healthy aging as nourishing one's life. Ayurveda is based on universal principles - not limited to a particular ethnic group or culture - to be person-centered and conflicting, both as an integration of existing healthcare systems as well as to preserve local traditional values can be used as a template to meet the needs of different populations [11]. This article is a literal approach to the concept of health and public health that does not explicitly gain access to details of the principles and practices of public health. The classical texts of Ayurveda describe various theories related to current public health practice. Ayurveda is widely used as a system of primary health care in India, and there is growing interest worldwide. The global trend of public health problems has led to a shift from its previous focus on infectious diseases to chronic lifestyle disorders and Ayurveda is undoubtedly a boon to address these problems with its old principles. With the recent development of the National Rural Health Mission and *Rashtriya Bal SwasthyaKaryakram*, some principles and measures are being used very effectively for the prevention of public health problems. The best example of public health through Ayurveda is to use *Chyawanprash*, Turmeric milk, *Giloy*, and follow other Ayurvedic rules to protect against the COVID-19 epidemic spread across the world at present. Modern medicine has been exceptionally developed with the amalgamation of technology in the fields of diagnosis, prophylactic and curative procedures. But the simple regiments described in ancient classical texts are in extreme use in dealing with the public health problems facing the present-day world. The study is a brief review of the concept of public health and health in Ayurveda, but the above statements can also be studied to find relevance and suitability in Ayurveda, which uses Ayurveda as a way to redress emerging and re-emerging public health problems of the present day.

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